

THE VRC CONNECTION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

July 2018

New NCVRC Coordinator and EP staff member - Dr. Anna Allen



As of the end of May 2018, the NCVRC has a new coordinator, Dr. Anna Allen. Dr. Allen previously served as the Public Health Liaison Veterinarian with NCDA&CS Emergency Programs for almost 5 years. Most recently, she taught in the Veterinary Technology Program at Miller-Motte College in Raleigh. At the end of May, she became the Southeast Region Emergency Programs Veterinarian filling Dr. Mandy Tolson's position. Dr. Allen is excited to be back with NCDA&CS EP and looks forward to coordinating the NCVRC as part of her job duties.

Dr. Allen was born in Chapel Hill and grew up in the Triangle area. She received her undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences from Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, where she competed as a member of the Varsity Equestrian Team. She received her DVM from NC State University College of Veterinary Medicine and a MPH from UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Dr. Allen has worked in private small animal practice as well as a large private equine practice. In 2013, she became a certified Foreign

Animal Disease Diagnostician upon completing the training course at Plum Island, NY.

Dr. Allen lives in Raleigh with her family. She has a 3.5 year old son, one cat, and two dogs. In her free time, she enjoys reading, yoga, running, and traveling.

Feel free to reach out to her anytime with questions or ideas about the NCVRC! Her email address is anna.allen@ncagr.gov.

In This Issue:

- Welcome Dr. Anna Allen - 1
- TERMS - 2
- AI Full-Scale Exercise - 3-4
- Nuclear Plant Exercise - 5
- Hurricane Preparedness - 6



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES

Emergency Programs Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

John Howard, Director





TERMS

Training & Exercise Registration Management System



NC DPS Website

As of July 1, 2018, we transitioned our responder registration out of ServNC. In October 2018 we will begin using TERMS (Training & Exercise Registration Management System) which is currently undergoing an update. You will need to create a new volunteer profile in TERMS when it goes live to continue your involvement with VRC. Through TERMS you will be able to browse and register for all kinds of trainings and the system will store your credentials, certificates of completion, and entire course history. This will be the system that we use to contact VRC membership on a regular basis and for deployments so it will be important to keep your information current. Detailed instructions on first time registration/creating a profile and using TERMS will be provided via email and available on the NCVRC website when the system becomes available.

Upcoming Events and Training Opportunities

If you know of any events or trainings coming up in your area that may be of interest to other members of NCVRC, please email the information to Dr. Anna Allen and she can send out a group email, put them here in the newsletter, and post them on the NCVRC website.

- September 8, 2018, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm, Hazardous Materials & Decontamination Awareness for Animal Response (NC-PEART-07), Piney Grove Fire & Rescue Department, Kernersville, NC. Training is FREE and open to the public. REGISTRATION REQUIRED in TERMS. <https://terms.ncem.org/>.
- September 28 is World Rabies Day - if there are any events going on in your area, let us know! Often there are vaccination clinics for the public. I will send out some educational materials around this time as well.
- November 2, 2018 - Every year NCDA&CS Emergency Programs staff offers the required Biosecurity/PPE Training during the Public Practice Track at the NC Veterinary Conference in Raleigh.

VRC COORDINATOR	UPCOMING EVENTS	REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT
Anna Allen, DVM, MPH Southeast Region Emergency Programs Veterinarian (919) 614-0072 anna.allen@ncagr.gov	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PEART HazMat and Decon Training, September 8• World Rabies Day September 28• NC Veterinary Conference Public Practice Track November 2, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICS 100, 200, and 700• Biosecurity/PPE Training• Knowledge of NC Emergency Management• Knowledge of Emergency Support Functions• Sign a Code of Conduct• Registration
REGISTRATION		
Contact: Dr. Anna Allen		

Avian Influenza Full-Scale Exercise

By Cody Grasty

This past June, North Carolina agriculture and emergency management personnel conducted a four-day avian influenza (AI) response full-scale exercise. Over 100 people from nine agencies participated at five different locations throughout the exercise and helped test AI response plans. This is the first exercise testing the State's AI response plans since 2007 and the largest one to date for North Carolina. Data collected during this activity is still being processed, but ripples of the great outcomes are still being felt – including better response coordination between agriculture and local/state emergency management personnel, verification that planned response activities work well, and a laundry list of items to work on over the next planning cycle.

This particular exercise and scenario can be traced back to a conversation in Fall 2017 between John Howard, Director for Emergency Programs with NCDA&CS, and Dr. Michael Martin, Director of Poultry Programs. During that discussion a question was asked – can we logistically support our field responders? From there, a working group of NCDA&CS, NC Emergency Management, and local emergency management personnel met for several months to craft exercise objectives, scenarios, and, in some circumstances, response plans that were lacking or missing. Originally, the exercise was focused on logistical support of field units – but over time morphed into a larger event that tested many aspects of the AI response plans ranging from laboratory testing to public information notification.

The first inject came a week before exercise participation was to begin. Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) had been confirmed in Virginia. By week's end, the virus had mutated into Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), triggering a limited activation of the various AI response plans. Exercise play began on Monday, June 18 with diagnostic samples confirmed positive for AI by Rollins Laboratory in Raleigh and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, IA. The information made its way to key players from NCDA&CS, NC Division of Public Health, NC Division of Emergency Management, and the NC Department of Environmental Quality using communication protocols found in the AI response plans. By the end of Day 1, state and local partners had been notified of positive sample, decisions about trade and state of emergency had been discussed, and AI response teams were dispatched to begin working on the simulated farms the next day.

Continued on Page 4

NCVRC MISSION: Train and prepare professionals in the animal care community to respond to all-hazards disaster events that affect both production and companion animals. Our members will serve as a resource for our state and the nation.

NOTES: For current news and updates, please visit the NCVRC website at www.ncvrc.org. If you have questions about the NCVRC or would like to offer suggestions or articles for future newsletters, contact Dr. Anna. Allen at anna.allen@ncagr.gov.

Avian Influenza Full-Scale Exercise

By Cody Grasty

On Tuesday, June 19, two field exercises were conducted on farms in Johnston County and Alexander County. The field response activities included donning/doffing personal protective equipment, conducting foaming operations of empty poultry houses, and decontaminating equipment and personnel. Local emergency response personnel were on-farm to support operations and the county emergency operations centers were opened to coordinate local assets. This provided a rare opportunity to work with local emergency response personnel on activities that would be performed during an AI outbreak. While exercise participants responded to the scenario and injects, observers watched the foam depopulation teams, decontamination teams, and other Incident Management Team (IMT) positions at work.

On Wednesday and Thursday, June 20 and 21, state partner agencies reported to the State Emergency Operations Center in Raleigh and Alexander and Johnston counties staffed their county emergency operations centers to continue to work through the simulated expanding outbreak. Multiple state and federal agencies were present to observe the AI response and were surprised when they were asked to participate in meetings or decision-making processes. AgIMT members were paired with their NC Emergency Management counterparts to learn from one another and jointly manage the incident. Field activities were simulated on Wednesday and injects were delivered to county emergency operation centers. After the exercise ended on Thursday, a Hot Wash was conducted to gather important feedback from participants. Feedback from the Hot Wash, Feedback Forms, and After Action Survey are still being compiled to identify gaps and best practices.

The 2018 NC Avian Influenza Full-Scale Exercise was a huge amount of work for many people and, overall, a great success. Relationships between individuals and agencies were forged and strengthened and processes and protocols were tested and evaluated. This exercise experience will serve everyone well when we have to respond to an outbreak of avian influenza in NC or we are requested to assist another state. If you want to learn more about the exercise, contact Cody Grasty (cody.grasty@ncagr.gov) who is the NCDA&CS EP Mountain Region Emergency Management Specialist.



Catawba Nuclear Power Plant Exercise

By Dr. Bruce Akers



On June 5, 2018 a nearby Nuclear Power Plant had a failure of one of its safety features, an “Unusual Event”.....RELAX!!!.....this was just an exercise....REALLY! Maintaining readiness to respond to such an event requires regular practice and review of plans to help prepare to respond and make critical decisions that will protect the citizens, infrastructure and environment near the plant. This sort of practice/exercise takes place twice a year for North Carolina Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Team (their partner agencies, of which NCDA&CS is one).

There are three nuclear plants in NC. The Catawba Plant is just south of Charlotte on the border with South Carolina, so this exercise required even more coordination and cooperation because it involved another state. South Carolina Emergency Management was the lead in partnership with NCEM because the 10 mile ring of initial concern around this plant reaches into NC. This 10 mile ring, also called the Exposure Pathway Zone (EPZ), is important because if there was a hazard, decisions for this close proximity zone need to be made in a timely manner to trigger protective actions for the public, such as “shelter in place” or “evacuation.”

As the day’s scenario progressed, starting with just an “Unusual Event” at the plant, appropriate agencies were alerted and their representatives were dispatched to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). NCDA&CS is one of those agencies called to participate. Why, you ask? Think, NC is an agriculture state that produces food to feed the state, the nation, and the world. Agriculture is “food in the field”. When an event starts, there is no way to know how quickly an event will be rendered safe. Any leakage or hazards have the potential to affect our food in the field, whether it be fruit, vegetable, or meat commodities. The first line of control to stop any potentially contaminated food products from ending up on the table is through prompt advising and regulatory actions from NCDA&CS and partner agencies. We are Emergency Support Function 11, Food and Agriculture.

The event scenario continued to progress to even more serious levels during the day....”Alert”, then “Site Area Emergency”. The scenario, unknown to the SERT partners during the exercise, forces us to do critical assessments, think about what to do if it progresses to the next level, and look forward to prepare for the next safety actions needed. If the event comes under control and subsides, great, then we can relax a little. If not, then we are ready for the next level of protective measures. Rejoice in the fact that NC is a very prepared state and these exercises hone our critical thinking and decision processes.

Luckily, actions simulated by the plant and decisions and protective actions taken by the state agencies were appropriate and graded as correct and timely as this exercise event came to an safe ending approximately seven (7) hours after it started. With the great leadership and the dedication of our state partners, North Carolina will be ready should such an event ever happen here.

Hurricane Season Preparedness

By Dr. Anna Allen



The Atlantic Hurricane Season officially began on June 1 and last until October. Historically, the peak of the season is in September, but North Carolina has certainly seen storms as early as July (Arthur) and as late as October (Matthew 2016). In our mission to serve the state's animal and agriculture communities in times of disaster, NCDA&CS Emergency Programs Division stands ready to respond. As a reminder, "the Saffir-Simpson Hurri-

cane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed. This scale estimates potential property damage. Hurricanes reaching Category 3 and higher are considered major hurricanes because of their potential for significant loss of life and damage. Category 1 and 2 storms are still dangerous, however, and require preventative measures" (<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php?>). What has been emphasized in multiple hurricane preparedness presentations recently is that almost of greater importance than the wind speed is the size and overall speed of the storm. Also, and especially in NC, the potential for flooding and water damage from a hurricane are greater risks than that of the wind. Even a tropical storm can cause major damage from flooding, especially if it is slow moving or there has already been rain in the days and weeks prior to the storm. Flooding brings a whole new set of response challenges including road closures, road and bridge destruction, erosion, contamination, and injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents caused by people driving into flood waters. The other point that has been emphasized is that no matter the hurricane season forecast that you may hear about on the news, how many named storms are predicted etc., it only takes one storm to cause devastating impacts that could affect the state for years after the storm.

Reminder - September is National Preparedness month. It marks an annual tradition to promote easy preparedness activities that everyone can take to ensure they are ready for disasters. It is especially important for us, as responders, to ensure that we are ourselves prepared as well as our homes and families. We can perform better in response if we know that our homes and families, to include our pets as well, are taken care of while we are away. Now is the time to update or prepare emergency plans and supplies and discuss these with your family.

Helpful links for preparedness and response can be found on the NCDA&CS Emergency Programs website (<http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/preparedness.htm>) as well as on the Department's disaster page (<http://ncagr.gov/disaster/index.htm>).